

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the production of leather, comprising at least two of the following process steps A) to D):

A) use of one or more polyelectrolytes in the production of semifinished products or intermediate products, comprising at least one of the steps (a) to (d)

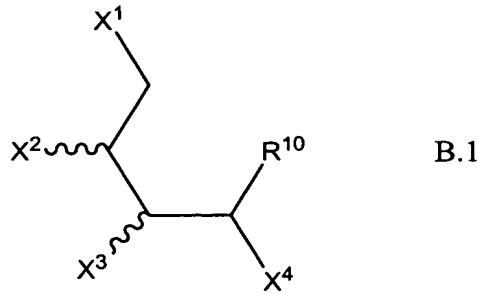
(a) addition of one or more polyelectrolytes and from 0 to 1.5% by weight, based on the salted weight, of lime, immediately before or during liming,

(b) addition of one or more polyelectrolytes before or during deliming,

(c) addition of one or more polyelectrolytes before or during bating,

(d) addition of one or more polyelectrolytes and, altogether, from 0 to 3% by weight, based on the pelt weight, of alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salt, immediately before or during pickling;

B) treatment of the hides during liming in aqueous liquor with one or more compounds of the formula B.1



or the corresponding alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, ammonium or phosphonium salts thereof,

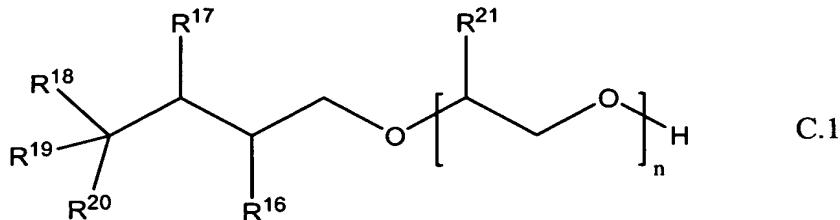
wherein: where:

R^{10} is hydrogen or C₁-C₁₂-alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or more mercapto or hydroxyl groups,

X¹ to X⁴, independently of one another, are hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl, hydroxyl, mercapto or NHR¹¹ and

R¹¹ is hydrogen, C₁-C₁₂-alkyl, formyl or C₁-C₄-alkylcarbonyl,
~~with the proviso that wherein at least two mercapto groups are contained comprised in~~ the compound or the compounds B.1;

C) use of degreasing agents of the formula C.1



for degreasing pelts, hides or other intermediate products and semifinished products in leather production,

wherein: where:

R¹⁶ to R¹⁹, independently of one another, are hydrogen or branched or straight-chain C₁-C₁₀-alkyl,

R²⁰ is hydrogen or C₁-C₂₅-alkyl,

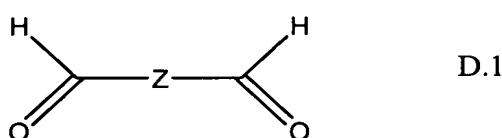
R²¹ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl and

n is an integer from 1 to 100,

R¹⁶ corresponding to C₁-C₁₀-alkyl when R¹⁸ to R²⁰ are each hydrogen

and at least one of the radicals R¹⁸ to R²⁰ corresponding to C₁-C₂₅-alkyl when R¹⁶ is hydrogen;

D) tanning with the use of a tanning agent which can be prepared by reacting at least one aldehyde of the formula D.1,

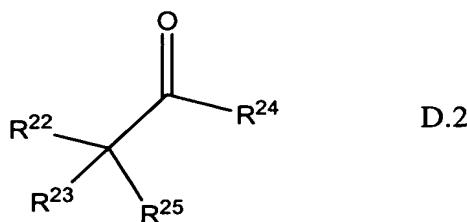


with at least one further identical or different aldehyde of the formula D.1,

wherein: where:

Z is a single chemical bond, unsubstituted or substituted C₁-C₁₂-alkylene, unsubstituted or substituted C₅-C₁₂-cycloalkylene or unsubstituted or substituted C₆-C₁₄-arylene,

the reaction being carried out in the presence of an acidic catalyst and optionally in the presence of at least one further carbonyl compound of the formula D.2



wherein: where:

R²² to R²⁵, independently of one another, are hydrogen, unsubstituted or substituted C₁-C₁₂-alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted C₃-C₁₂-cycloalkyl, unsubstituted or substituted C₇-C₁₃-aralkyl or unsubstituted or substituted C₆-C₁₄-aryl,

~~with the proviso that wherein~~ at least one further aldehyde of the formula D.1 in which Z ~~contains~~ comprises a-hydrogen atoms, or at least one further carbonyl compound of the formula D.2, is present when Z corresponds to a single chemical bond or to a radical without a-hydrogen atoms.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, comprising ~~at least~~ the process steps A) and B).

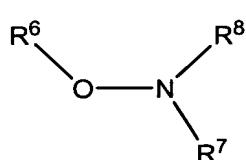
Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, comprising ~~at least~~ the process steps A), B) and C).

Claim 4 (Original): A process as claimed in claim 1, comprising the process steps A) to D).

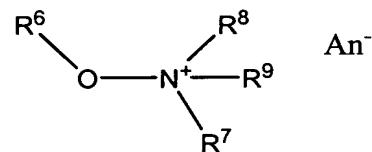
Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 2, claim 2, 3 or 4, wherein at least the step (a) is contained comprised in process step A).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, one or more of the preceding claims, wherein no lime (0% by weight of lime) is used in step (a) of process step A).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, one or more of the preceding claims, wherein one or more hydroxylamine compounds of the formula A.15.a or A.15.b

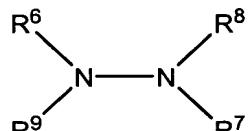


A.15.a



A.15.b

or one or more unprotonated or protonated hydrazine compounds of the formula A.16



A.16

are additionally introduced in step (a) of process step A),
wherein where:

R⁶ to R⁹, independently of one another, are hydrogen, C₁-C₂₀-alkyl or C₆-C₁₄-aryl and

An⁻ is halide, sulfate, hydrogen sulfate, phosphate, hydrogen phosphate or dihydrogen phosphate or a mixture of said anions.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 7, wherein hydroxylamine is added in step (a) of process step A).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 5, one or more of claims 5 to 8, wherein alkali metal hydroxide and/or alkali metal carbonate are additionally used in step (a) of process step A).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 5, one or more of claims 5 to 9, wherein the process water obtained after combination of process step A) (a) and process step B) and substantially freed from the organic components, ~~in particular from proteins and any hairs,~~ is used at least partly in at least one further step of process steps A)(b) to A)(d), C) and D) for the production of leather and/or for the presoak and main soak of the rawhides.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 10, wherein the process water obtained after combination of process step A) (a) and process step B) and substantially freed from the organic components, ~~in particular from proteins and any hairs,~~ is used at least partly in step (b) of process step A) and/or in process step D) and/or for the presoak and main soak of the rawhides.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A process water substantially freed from organic components, ~~in particular from proteins and any hairs, obtainable obtained~~ after combination

of process step A) (a) and process step B) by a process for the production of leather as claimed in claim 5. ~~one or more of claims 5 to 9.~~

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A leather which has been produced by a process as claimed in claim 1. ~~one or more of claims 1 to 11.~~